

The Daily Charge

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Telling the MND-Baghdad Story

Saturday, Feb. 24, 2007



(Photo by Pfc. Jon Cano 2-10 Public Affairs)

Through the shadows

Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division "Baghdad Eagles," move through a muddy palm grove on a patrol near Mahmudiyah, Iraq, 17 miles south of the Iraqi capital.

Medical assistance provided to Abidone locals

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Even the deaths of 17 first cousins at the hands of insurgents could not alter his steadfastness. The murder of his two brothers did not shake his resolve. Even the paralysis of another brother only strengthened his determination to improve the security of

his people.

For Raad Rashed Abed Al Shibli, who is the sheik of Al Shibli of the Al Amri tribe, working with coalition forces has been a way of life since first contact. He supports coalition forces and the Iraqi government, even when it jeopardizes those closest to him.

"We're cooperating and informing (the coalition forces and Iraqi Army) about bad

people here," Shibli said through an interpreter during a medical assistance mission in the village of Abidone inside the Bay Al Sabir High School of Baghdad's Abu Ghraib district Feb. 17.

The mission to provide health care to the residents of Abidone was meant to

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General tours Al Doura market, sees progress

By Spc. Alexis Harrison
2-1 Cav. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - The 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division commander, Col. Bryan Roberts, got a chance to show the Multi-National Force - Iraq commander some of the improvements the "Black Jack Brigade" has been making since its arrival a little more than four months ago.

Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno walked alongside the Black Jack Brigade troops on the streets of Al Doura Feb. 21, taking a look at the market revitalization and security being provided for the residents of the area that used to be one of the capital's most dangerous.

The market has been one of the main focuses for the Soldiers from the Black Jack Brigade and troops attached to them from 2nd Battalion 12th Infantry Regiment.

After a little more than four months of hard work and



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison 2-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Multi-National Force - Iraq commanding general, Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, speaks with an Iraqi general during his visit to the Al Doura joint security station Feb. 21.

stead-fast resolve, the market - that had been one of the worst areas in the capital - has come back to life as a hub of commerce for the people of Al Doura.

Lt. Col. Stephan Michael,

commander 2-12th Infantry, said that after the success they had with Operation "Gladiator" in December, persistent patrolling by the Iraqi Army, Iraqi police, national police and his own

troops, has led to evidence of improvement a daily basis.

"We wanted to focus on a place where the people in the area could see the results happening," Michael said.

Before the large-scale operation began late last year, the market yielded more bodies than bread or produce.

The streets were empty and the threat of violence was present around every corner, but the troops from Fort Carson, Colo., made sure to change all that.

Now the market has its doors open and people fill the once-empty streets to once again haggle and barter for daily goods and services.

Odierno came at a time when the market was back to a functioning order.

After seeing the market, he moved on to get a glimpse at one of the joint security stations being stood up all over the capital.

Arabic Phrase of the Day

mutar

Defined:
rain

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 66
Low: 44



Tomorrow

High: 70
Low: 50



Monday

High: 70
Low: 50

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Locals get medical care at Bay Al Sabir High School

Medical

From Page 1

reward people like Shibli for their sacrifices and trust in Iraqi security forces and the coalition.

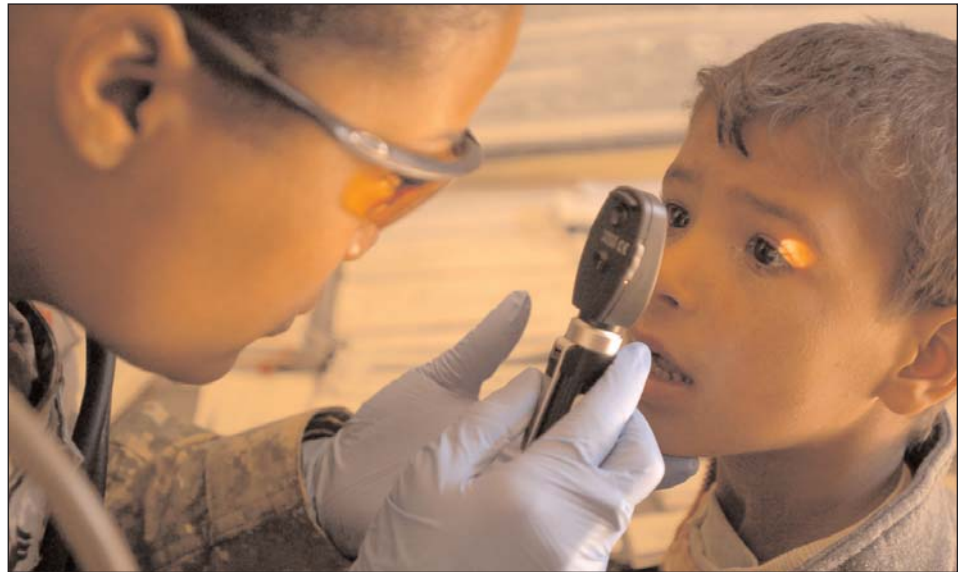
With travel hampered by poor transportation security, many of the Abidone residents are unable to receive health care outside of the village. By bringing the clinic to the people, those in need were at the very least screened, Shibli said.

The check-ups were a thanks to the people from the coalition for past support, said, said Capt. Ryan Liebhaber, commander, Troop A, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry).

"The local leadership is completely willing to work with the coalition. We're trying to pay them back for the help they've given us as well as build rapport with the local nationals," said the native of Centerville, Ohio.

Building a rapport with local nationals was not restricted to Soldiers. The rapport between the Iraqi Army and the Abidone community was also strengthened by the event, Shibli said.

"The other good thing is you guys (coalition forces) brought (the) Iraqi military with you because this will increase their reputation and (foster) a better relationship (between the



(Photos by Spc. L.B. Edgar 7th MPAD)

Sgt. Shawn Mackey, a health care specialist with Company C, 299th Forward Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, assesses the health of a 6-year-old Iraqi boy during a medical assistance mission in the village of Abidone Feb. 17.

Iraqi Army, tribes and sheiks)," Shibli explained. "We're expecting the government to saddle up, put their differences aside and let the IA and everyone do their job right."

Shibli, other local sheiks and Abidone leaders met with the platoon leader of the Iraqi Army unit responsible for the mission's security, 2nd Lt. Muhammad Khalid Mohsin, with the quick reaction force of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division.

Mohsin discussed the needs of the community and how the IA could help the people of Abidone. Cell phone numbers were exchanged in case of future emergencies, he said.

Building Iraqi confidence in their Army was part of the mission, said Capt. Warrick Craig, contract and project manager for 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.

"What we're trying to do is get them (IA) more interested in this community and in turn that will develop the local populace's confidence in the IA," said the native of Sparkman, Ark. "We just want to put an Iraqi face on it to show them that regardless of where we live at, we can all work together and that's the future of Iraq."

Seven health care providers and one den-

tist, screened and treated patients for health issues and remedied the conditions whenever possible.

The medical staff was pulled from across the Multi-National Division-Baghdad and provided medical assistance to more than 100 Iraqis, said Maj. Michael Philbin, 1-7th FA's executive officer.

"I think it was a great success because we were able to integrate the Iraqi Army, who handed out toys for the kids, food and candy as well as other humanitarian-assistance items," said the native of Fairport, N.Y. "It gives the people a chance to see they're providing security and providing for them and that's what really matters because some day we won't be here doing this anymore. It will just be them."

As expected, the people of Abidone reciprocated by proving intelligence to Soldiers and IA, just as Shibli has done for so long.

"Before we even started we had our first tip," Philbin said. "Before the first patient was ever seen, one of the local nationals came up and gave us a tip about some (Anti-Iraqi forces)."

The tips just keep on coming from the Abidone village.



Sgt. Shawn Mackey, a health care specialist with Co. C, 299th FSB, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., assesses the health of a newborn Iraqi baby during a medical assistance mission in the village of Abidone Feb. 17.

Soldiers participate in early morning marathon

By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3-1 Cav. Public Affairs

BAQUBAH, Iraq -- It was pitch black, with no sun in sight, as a mixture of Army, Air Force, Navy and civilian contractors approached the starting line for the Austin Marathon and Half Marathon at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, in Baqubah, Iraq, Feb. 18. With the official "Go!" at 5:30 a.m., the military personnel ran into the darkness to begin their long journey to complete 26.2 miles.

Having the Austin Marathon in Iraq was the brain child of Capt. Christopher Widell, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. Widell and his wife started running together over a year ago, and entered the Austin Distance Challenge together before his deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08.

"I started running just for fun over a year ago with my wife," said Widell. "She decided to do the Austin Distance Challenge, which is a series of six races that starts with a 6K and ends with the Austin Marathon."

Widell knew his wife would be running the Austin Marathon and so would he. He was going to live up to his end of the bar-

gain.

"I think it's pretty cool," continued Widell. "[My wife and I] each have goals and it keeps us from constantly thinking about how bad we miss each other. We can ask each other about training and how it's going. It is a little bit of a bond between us [while I'm deployed]."

And that's when Widell decided to bring the Austin Marathon to the Soldiers of Grey Wolf. These Fort Hood, Texas, based Soldiers were given the opportunity to partake in an event which is highly regarded to many people of the central Texas region.

As the morning of the event came, Widell wasn't expecting many participants for the early morning race. He was surprised by the final turnout.

"I was really impressed with the turnout," Widell said. "When I first started talking about this in late December, early January, I was thinking maybe only 15 people who show up. But 48, that's amazing."

Supporters and volunteers for the race lined different areas around the FOB, serving the runners water and food when they passed by. There was also a large group of supporters and Soldiers cheering for the runners as they crossed the finish line. Some Soldiers keeping up with their time, other just happy

they finished the 13 and 26 mile course.

"I was very surprised," said Capt. Nicolas Sheldon, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Military Transition Team attached the 3rd BCT, about finishing first in the half marathon. Sheldon said the secret to his success was running for an hour straight each time he ran for physical training.

"Typically, I'm on missions three days a week and planning for missions the other four," said the Utica, NY, native. "Every single planning day, I make sure I get an hour in of running. Running like that for a month will help get you ready."

Capt. Christopher Bennett, Company C, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, and Staff Sgt. Jose Chavarin, 113th Combat Stress Patrol attached to Grey Wolf, said they were just happy to finish the event.

"It is a good feeling to finish," said Chavarin. "This is an accomplishment that helps keeps our mind out of the reality that we are going through right now."

"It's a good separation from the war zone," he said. "This is a nice change to the routine of being out here."

"There is a good connection there," said Bennett. "I'm about to go home on leave and doing this right before I go brings me a little bit closer to home."

Bennett and Chavarin trained together in preparation for the event, pushing each other to better themselves and to achieve their goal of finishing.

"We have been training together for a while, so for us to start and finish together is awesome," said Bennett.

And the sense of accomplishment was just what Widell was hoping for.

"I hope the Soldiers that ran take a sense of accomplishment with them," said Widell. "I know a lot of these guys have never ran a half or full marathon, so this is big for them."

"And with the Soldiers training and preparing for the race, I hope this took them away from the 'Groundhog Day' feeling that Iraq can be," he added. Widell also hopes the Soldiers gain a sense of appreciation for the sport.

"Running is fun; it's a healthy sport," he said. "There is really nothing bad about running at all. And it has brought a lot of people together today to set goals and accomplish something big."



(Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud 3-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Capt. Christopher Widell, HHT, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.; 1st Lt. Liv Isham, Co. C, 215th BSB; Capt. Mike Anderson, HHT, 215th BSB; and 1st Lt. Kristen Anderson, Co. C, 215th BSB, run on the rough roads of Forward Operating Base Warhorse, for the Austin Marathon and Half Marathon, Feb. 18.

Hoping Barry gets the boot from baseball

On July 20, 1976 Henry Aaron connected off California Angel right-hander Dick Drago for his 755th, and final, home run of his career.

Aaron, a Milwaukee Brewer for his final two seasons, played sparingly the rest of the season and didn't reach the fences again.

Barry Bonds reported for spring training with a new \$15-million one-year contract and growing clouds of suspicion of illegal steroid use and potential grand jury indictment. The man who has hit more homeruns in his 40s (Bonds) returns to center stage in San Francisco just 21 home runs shy of "Hammerin' Hank's" career record.

My first hope for this upcoming Major League Baseball season is that Bonds doesn't make it.

The steroid generation of superstar baseball players, headed by Bonds but including other notables like Rafael Palmeiro, Jose Canseco, Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire - who collectively could do a commercial endorsing better living through chemistry - has the average baseball fan scratching their heads wondering how good these guys would have been without the juice.

Without a doubt, they all had talent - but 70-plus homerun talent in a season (66 for Sosa)? I don't think so. Not without the needle.

The voters for the baseball Hall of

Trigger Pull

Master Sgt.
Dave Larsen



Fame took one look at Mark McGwire's first look at induction into the shrine and shouted a collective, "Next!" Palmeiro comes up for consideration next year. Even with 3,000 hits and 500 homeruns, "Raffy" is toast.

Jose Canseco has done his utmost to stay in the public eye since the wayward 'Bash Brother's' tell-all book put some of baseball's best under the microscope.

Let's see: there was a comeback attempt, as a pitcher (!) in some California semi-pro league and a starring role in a reality TV show. Next up, I think Jose will a) make an appearance on Fear Factor (eating live worms is sort of like sports, isn't it?); b) lose all his money on day one of the World Series of Poker; c) jump in the back of the line with a cast of thousands and claim paternity of Anna Nicole Smith's baby girl; or d) all of the above.

Sammy Sosa, believe it or not, is attempting to make a comeback with the

Texas Rangers.

He signed a minor league deal and is hoping his slowing bat can catch back up to major league heat again. Based on his 2005 performance with the Baltimore Orioles (.221 batting average and only 14 dingers), I doubt that Sammy found the Fountain of Youth or improved the ever-widening hole in his swing facing a pitching machine.

Sammy started with the Rangers, signed by them as a speedy, gangly teen from the Dominican Republic.

It really costs the Rangers nothing to bring Sosa to spring training, maybe generating the interest of more snow birds in the process.

Speaking of spring training arrivals, most everyone got there on time this year, except the habitually tardy Manny Ramirez from the Boston Red Sox. I think it's an allergy thing for him that doesn't clear up until March.

With the suitors of spring lining up in Florida and Arizona for the grand prize, a World Series title, I can only hope that my Milwaukee Brewers can break the .500-mark for the first time in 14 years.

That brings us back to Bonds, the man who's chasing the record that Ruth built, but Aaron owns. My biggest hope for the coming baseball season remains that Barry Bonds gets the boot from baseball before he can reach the record books.

TELEVISION



	8:00p.m.	8:30p.m.	9:00p.m.	9:30p.m.	10:00p.m.	10:30p.m.	11:00p.m.
AFN sports	NBA- Utah Jazz at Denver Nuggets	Sportscenter	Sportscenter	Sportscenter	Sportscenter	Sportscenter	NBA
AFN prime ATLANTIC	NBC Nightly News	ABC World News	The Koala Brothers	Robot Boy	Sonic X	Tutenstein	Sherlock Holmes
AFN news	Special Report with Brit Hume	Your World with Neil Cavuto	Your World with Neil Cavuto	Larry King Live	Larry King Live	Larry King Live	Headline News